

Madame Chairs and members of the Senate Public Health Committee, my name is Gloria Blick. I reside in Stamford, CT and am testifying today in support of House Bill 6645, An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill.

I am 91 years old and can honestly state I have been most fortunate to never have had a serious illness. Yes I have had glaucoma, Lyme disease, both my hips replaced and shoulder surgery, but as a Healthy Senior I recouped quickly.

I am a member of the Stamford Senior Center and was Past Chairlady for 2 years. Currently, I am on the Board of Directors for the Smith House in Stamford which is a City owned Health Care Center. I have been on the Advisory Board of the South Western Ct. Agency on Aging for over 10 years. I had been appointed by former Mayor Malloy as a Commissioner on the Commission on Aging for Stamford. I am giving you this information to clearly show you my strong connection to and involvement with seniors.

With a background of working with seniors, I have shared many experiences with my friends during their difficult times. I watched my dear friend have to COMMIT, YES COMMIT, HER BELOVED HUSBAND TO A NURSING HOME due to terminal cancer. I SHARED HER PAIN EACH DAY THAT SHE WENT TO VISIT HIM, AS HE BECAME UNAWARE OF HER PRESENCE DUE TO THE FACT THAT HE WAS BEING ADMINISTERED SO MANY PAIN-RELIEVING DRUGS. We cried together after her DAILY VISITS to her beloved, who wished he had had the choice to end his suffering in a dignified manner. This week, I shared the pain of watching my dear friend wait for the results of her CRITICALLY ILL HUSBAND WHO HAS METASTATIC CANCER. She has watched him suffer for a long

period of time and now she is alone in a hospital waiting TO FIND OUT THAT THERE ARE NO OTHER OPTIONS LEFT FOR HIM. Unless you have had the privilege of a long life you cannot imagine the suffering experienced by the patient and the loved ones of a Terminally ill, MENTALLY COMPETENT patient.

I hope you all may have the privilege and good fortune to live 91 years without causing your loved ones the terrible experience of watching someone you love suffer IN AGONY AND DYING AN UNDIGNIFIED MISERABLE DEATH. I hope you can imagine sitting next to the bed of your loved one knowing there isn't anything you can possibly do to help them. Life is such a PRIVILEGE and we make choices each day of our lives as to the best way for us to go through it, but when it comes to our destiny, we are forbidden to make CERTAIN choices.

Today, I would like to relay to you what would be my response if I was suddenly told I was ill with some illness that my physician and other physicians stated there was nothing more that could be done for me other than to fill me with narcotics to help keep me pain free.

I have been able to care for myself, keep my home, drive, shop and for me to be kept alive, drugged, without being able to function as a human being, I would PRAY to be allowed to choose my own time, place and environment for DEATH. If I did not have a CHOICE and I was suffering endlessly with a terminal illness, I WOULD FIND A WAY TO END MY LIFE. And believe me, I would find a way. This would then cause my family and loved ones such pain and that isn't the way I lived my 91 years.

In short, I am testifying in support of HB6645 because I believe that all terminally ill, mentally competent patients, including myself if I one day

am faced with this situation, should have the CHOICE to sit with their doctors and discuss receiving prescriptions with which they could end their suffering in a dignified manner with their family and friends with them, if they so choose.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted
Gloria Black